



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

## REGION I

J.F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203-2211

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

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## FAX TRANSMITTAL

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To <i>Al Haring</i>	From <i>Harry S.</i>
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NSN 7540-01-317-7368	5090 101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Al Haring, Branch Head  
Environmental Restoration Branch  
Northern Division - NAVFAC  
10 Industrial Highway (MS - 82)  
Lester, PA 19113-2090

Re: Concerns at Navy Superfund Sites in Region 1

Dear Mr. Haring: *Al*

This letter touches on several topics of concern to us here in the New England office of EPA that we discussed yesterday on the telephone. As you know, we have been working with the Navy and the States on a number of Navy Superfund in New England for several years. I would like to call out several items of concern that have yet to be resolved at three Navy sites. In particular, these issues apply to: the Naval Education and Training Center (NETC) in RI, the Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) in RI, and the Naval Submarine Base New London (NSBNL) in CT.

1. Contractor Oversight. The Navy has the responsibility to oversee the activities undertaken by the Navy contractors, and this is an important link to the quality of the documents submitted for regulatory review. With several recent submittals, we have seen a decline in the quality of the documents submitted. This makes the review process more difficult and time consuming, and ultimately delays the remedy selection process since there is an insufficient foundation upon which to base remedy selections. Our experience is that the remedy selection proceeds more expeditiously and efficiently when the contractor team has not only the requisite technical knowledge and skill mix, but also a familiarity with the requirements of Superfund and the remedy selection process.
2. Ecological Risk Assessments. As stated above, familiarity with the requirements of a Superfund ecological risk assessment is essential (academic knowledge alone is insufficient), particularly for the Navy sites that are located along the shoreline and have known ecological impacts. We want to learn from our experiences at NETC and integrate an ecological risk assessment into the remedial investigation (RI) process early. The Navy project managers need to be able to access the biology section and other Navy experts in this area, and I do not believe this is happening to a sufficient degree.



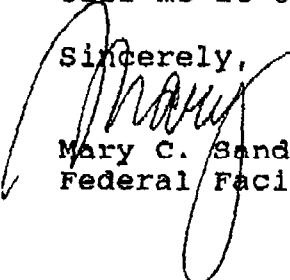
We have provided the Navy with specific comments in this area for several years that reflect recurring issues. Concerns such as the use of comparative risk and deficient technical procedures are repeating themselves in 1994. We believe that the Navy contractor teams are capable of performing the required work, but the documents that are being submitted for review do not reflect this.

3. Sequence of Remedial Activities. We have had several conversations over the years about ways to expedite the cleanup process. One of the ways is to "overlap phases," that is, to begin the next phase of the remedial process before the previous step is completed. Examples include: developing the remedial response objectives and the feasibility study (FS) alternatives prior to finalization of the RI; development of a preferred alternative while the FS is under review; drafting the Record of Decision (ROD) while the Proposed Plan is out for comment; and beginning the design process while the ROD is being finalized for signature. The public needs to be involved throughout the process and provided a sufficient opportunity to review and comment on the documents and the options presented.

However, we have seen cases of this philosophy taken to the extreme. We have been receiving design documents prematurely from the Navy, and I have had to instruct the EPA Remedial Project Managers (RPMs) not to review these documents because we do not have any of the necessary prerequisite information. We have received design documents without an RI, risk assessment, or FS available. We are concerned that it is inefficient for the Navy to prepare these documents before there is more certainty they describe the actual remedy selected, and that we do not have a sufficient Administrative Record upon which to base remedy selection and to allow for public involvement in the process.

While I believe the Navy has done excellent work at many of the sites throughout our region, there seems to be an opportunity to conduct a "mid-course check" and to examine how we are conducting business at the existing sites, and to set good examples for the new Navy sites that have recently been added to the NPL. Please call me at 617/573-5711 so we can discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Sanderson, Chief  
Federal Facilities Superfund Section